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## Mount Rainier National Park News Release

Monday June 18

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A search continues at Mount Rainier National Park for Jeff Graves, 47, of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Despite an extensive effort today, searchers found few clues to narrow a search that has lasted for two days.

Mr. Graves was reported missing when he did not return from a day hike on Eagle Peak the evening of Saturday, June 16. A search began at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday. Forty individuals assisted, including 10 search teams and three teams from German Shepherd Search Dogs of Washington State. Vehicles patrolled the U.S. Forest Service roads outside the south park boundary, and rangers contacted and interviewed day-hikers who had been on the Eagle Peak trail on Saturday. A helicopter remained on standby all day due to poor weather conditions.

The search continued at 5:30 a.m. on Monday, June 18. Fifty-two people assisted in the search, including 15 ground teams. Two volunteer dog teams from Northwest Bloodhounds Search & Rescue tracked scent from Mr. Graves's vehicle, parked at the Longmire Museum. Both dogs showed interest in the drainage to the north of the lower Eagle Peak trail; however, a ground team searching the drainage did not find anything remarkable. A team positioned along the roads used binoculars to search the cliffs on the north and northwest sides of the peak. The weather progressively improved throughout the day, and a helicopter from WorldWind Helicopters in Renton, Washington was able to join the search shortly after noon. No conclusive clues were found.

Tuesday's search will emphasize high-priority areas, expanded search areas to the south, and aerial searches. It is expected to involve between 50 and 60 searchers. Additional hikers who had been on the Eagle Peak Trail on Saturday have been identified and will be contacted.

Jeff Graves was in the park visiting his mother, Ruth Graves, who is now serving her third year as a volunteer interpretive ranger. Jeff and his wife, Randi, have a seven-year-old son.

The Eagle Peak Trail is a strenuous day hike that climbs 3000 feet in 3.6 miles beginning at Longmire, in the southwest corner of Mount Rainier National Park. The trail is currently snow-covered above 5100 feet. The search area includes rugged, heavily forested wilderness with many cliffs and ravines. Saturday and Sunday nights were cool with rain, fog, and low temperatures in the mid 30s. Mr. Graves was wearing fleece and a red Gortex jacket, and carrying a daypack.

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